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EXPANSION OF COMMON PROPERTY IN RUMANIA

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The plenary session of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party, 19-20 August 1953, stressed the duty of the party and the state to assist collectives to become strong units, capable of producing large quantities of grain and stock. Since 1949, more than 300,000 peasant families united in collectives and TOZ. When a collective is formed, members pool their individual parcels of land into one or several large units. According to Article 7 of the Model Statute for Collectives, the members also bring into the collective all their draft animals, implements, seeds, fodder, and all other tool and machine repair facilities they may possess as common property. The statute states that 25-50 percent of the total value of the property brought into the collective becomes part of the basic fund. This percentage is established by the general meeting. Every family joining a collective must pay a registration tax of 25-50 lei, according to its financial means. These taxes are also added to the basic fund of the collective.

The majority of collectives strictly apply the provisions of the statute with regard to the creation of common property. There are, however, some cases in which not all collectivists respect their obligations to bring their entire land, all their draft animals, and their entire agricultural inventory of machines and implements into the collective, or pay the full registration fee. In other cases, as for example at the Cotofeni-din-Fata Collective, Craiova Regiune, the raion people's council and the commune people's council did not supervise the proper pooling of land. This delayed the setting up of a common ownership.

Disregard of the provisions of the statute regarding the formation of common property hampers the development of collectives and the increase of collective income. The model statute further provides for the operation of small farms by collectivists to supplement the income obtained from collectives. In the collective, the common interests harmonize with the private interests of the members. The higher the productivity per hectare, the faster the growth of collective wealth; and the greater the income from products, the greater also the workday pay for every member. Collectives obtained 25-30 percent larger grain harvests in 1953. Leading collectives also had outstanding results in animal raising.

These facts sufficiently prove the possibility of combining personal and common interests for the common good. Private farms of collectivists should, therefore, also be aided to the greatest possible extent. The importance of private farming cannot be minimized as long as the collective cannot fully satisfy the needs of its members. It is a grave mistake to identify the private farm of a collectivist with the individual farm of an independent peasant. The plenary session of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party of 19-20 August 1953 criticized the fact that private farms of collectivists were treated as individual farms, having been assessed the same collection quotas as independent peasants. The principle of coexistence of common property with personal property in collectives is a valid principle not only for the transition period from capitalism to socialism, but for the entire period of socialism.

At the Congress of Collective Leaders held in May 1953, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej discussed the advantages of mechanized agriculture. Collectives plowed 88 percent of their arable land, sowed 35 percent of all crops, harvested 45 percent of their grain, threshed 100 percent of their grain, and disked 89 percent of their land with the aid of MTS in 1953.

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During the 1953 spring and summer campaign, MTS were able to carry out cultivation. The use of tractors and machines, however, should not exclude the use of draft animals in small fields, on hilly land, on inclines, etc., where the use of machines would only delay labor or even make it impossible.

Up to 1953, the Ministry of Agriculture had no control over the management of MTS and did not enforce the strict observance of contracts. Often MTS directors and agricultural supervisors neglected commitments made to collectives, as was the case of the Vlaici MTS, Pitesti Regiune, which neglected shallow plowing at collectives for 10 days without any valid reason. MTS managers should watch over the careful fulfillment of contracts both in regard to the quality of work and time schedule. Agricultural methods must be applied at all times to increase production. Cleaning and treating of seeds must be a rule at collectives.

Collectives were prepared for the 1953 spring campaign and completed sowing of grain 10 days ahead of individual peasants. The Crucea Collective, Crucea Commune, Calarasi Raion, Bucharest Regiune, sowed grain in check rows, harvesting 15 percent more wheat than fields sown in straight rows. The Cosereni Collective, Cosereni Commune, Ploesti Regiune, used manure and had 40 percent more corn than harvested from fields without fertilizer. The application of advanced agricultural methods enabled the Olga Bancic Collective of Palazu-Mare, Constanta Regiune, to obtain an average production of 2,200 liters of milk from each cow in 1952.

Agricultural rules were not applied equally well at all collectives, however. While some leading collectives had excellent results, others obtained substandard harvests. Members of many collectives were not guided and advised by MTS technicians nor by the agricultural sections of people's councils. Often the guidance given collectives was limited to general circulars and orders written for the entire raion, without an analysis of individual conditions at collectives. For example, MTS in Ploesti Regiune did not give enough aid or advice to collectives.

When agricultural rules are not properly applied, production per hectare drops, and harvests are substandard and in many cases even ruined. This, of course, affects the income of the collective and its members. At the Fetesti Collective, Bucharest Regiune, for example, storage rules were not observed. As a result, about 5 carloads of fodder spoiled. At least 3 carloads of grain were lost at the Poarta-Alba Collective, Constanta Regiune, due to negligence during the harvest. Members of collectives were not trained in how to apply scientific methods in agriculture and animal raising.

The collective is a large farm which can only be managed on the basis of a plan. Fifty large collectives with extensive land have drawn up long-range development plans in 1953. The first step in the right direction is the rational organization of arable land. Collectives which strictly observed the requirements of the state and expanded their production branches according to yearly production plans, had the greatest successes.

Many collectives were guided by party and state agents, and agricultural technicians in developing the cultivation of industrial crops, vegetables, etc. Many collectives expanded cultivation of cotton and sugar beets. Vegetable growing is another important branch of agriculture, at collectives located close to cities. For example, the Bod Collective outside Stalin allotted 65 hectares of its arable land to vegetable gardening. Many collectives set up animal farms and built stables, thereby increasing their resources.

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The value of workdays increases considerably at collectives which have many production branches. For example, collectivist Nicolae Mosara of the Furculesti Collective, Bucharest Regiune, received 6,396 kilograms of wheat, 3,656 kilograms of corn, 736 kilograms of sunflower seeds, 22.5 kilograms of cotton yarn, 137 meters of cotton fabric, and a large sum of money for 952 workdays performed by him and his family in 1952 at cotton, sunflower, and grain fields. Collectives with many production branches not only have larger income, but are also assured work all year round. The members of such collectives receive a large share of produce, meat, etc., throughout the year.

The fair distribution of produce and cash income is of major importance in the development of collectives. The Model Statute for Collectives requires collectives to set aside, after delivery of all quotas to the state, a common reserve of seeds, fodder, food, and money. Part of the produce is sold to the state, to cooperatives, or on free markets, in accordance with the decision of the general meeting. The balance of the produce is distributed among the members in accordance with the number of workdays. The cash income from the sale of surplus produce is used to pay taxes to the state, and to cover administration and production costs. Funds are set aside for the social and cultural needs of the collective, and the collective basic fund is increased. The balance of cash income is then distributed among the members of the collective according to the number of workdays. The statute provides for an allocation of 10-12 percent of all cash revenues to the basic fund at grain-growing collectives, and 12-15 percent at vegetable-growing collectives. This allocation enables the collective to make the necessary outlays for the purchase of additional animals, agricultural implements, replanting of orchards, new buildings, and any other investments contributing to the growth of the collective and the increase in production.

The amount of earnings depends on the production of the collective, which must be increased every year. The wise distribution of income, and especially the increase of basic funds, is the main condition for the prosperity of collectives. The Palazu-Mare Collective, Constanta Regiune, and the Calarasi-Vechi Collective, Bucharest Regiune, are examples of wise distribution of income. Some collectives, however, have the unhealthy practice of distributing the entire income to their members. This results in many shortcomings in the administration of the collectives, in lack of funds for expansion, and ultimately in nonfulfillment of planned quotas. The method practiced at some collectives of allotting the entire income to the investment fund is just as wrong. In such cases the needs of collective members are completely disregarded.

The importance of growth of common property is clearly demonstrated by the comparison of economic conditions at two collectives, the Gheorghe Doja Collective of Bors Commune, Oradea Raion, Oradea Regiune, and the Drapelul Rosu Collective of Cofa Commune, Salonta Raion, Oradea Regiune. Both collectives were created in 1950. They have the same amount of land, the same amount of manpower, and similar means of development, but which were not used to the same extent.

The Gheorghe Doja Collective wisely used its cash reserves and the credits granted by the state for new investments amounting to 351,783 lei in 3 years. This enabled the collective to considerably increase its production and especially its animal raising. The collective had one stable for 50 animals and one pen for 19 hogs in 1950; now, it has three stables for 150 animals, two pens for 50 hogs, a poultry house for 150 birds, six storerooms with a capacity of 310 tons of grain, and a repair shop. The income of the collective is 500 percent greater as a result of investments and the hard work of collectivists. Members consequently received larger individual income. For example, every collectivist received 7.95 kilograms of grain, 1.7 kilograms of potatoes, 1.5 kilograms of hay, 4 kilograms of straw, 8 lei in cash, milk, vegetables, etc., for each work day in 1952. The cash income of collectivists increased from 240,995 lei in 1951 to 339,939 lei in 1952.

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The Drapelul Rosu Collective, which had the same resources as the Gheorghe Doja Collective, invested only 181,041 lei in 3 years. This prevented the collective from expanding and permitted only a 140 percent increase in common property value. Consequently, the individual income of the collectivists was not as large as that of the Gheorghe Doja members. The remuneration was, therefore, only 5.2 kilograms of grain, 0.160 kilograms of sunflower seeds, 0.230 kilograms of potatoes, 0.900 kilograms of vegetables, 1 kilogram of hay, and 3 lei in cash for each workday in 1952.

Good labor organization and labor distribution is very important in the management of collectives. Collectivists must be assigned duties in accordance with their usefulness to the collective. Fluctuation of manpower must be eliminated. Discipline and full-time attendance at work are of special importance. Instruction and training are inefficient or even nonexistent in many collectives. Consequently, collectivists are not fully aware of their obligation to give all their time and effort to collective labor, and many stay away from work or do poor work.

The workday is the unit of labor measurement and the criterion for labor distribution. The management council of a collective proposes to the general meeting of collectivists the work norms for all types of labor and the estimated workday value, on the basis of the norms recommended by the Ministry of Agriculture. These estimates are then applied in calculating income. Additional workday payment is granted for overproduction and deductions of workdays are made in cases of nonfulfillment of required norms. The compensation received by each member of a collective is, therefore, in direct proportion to his workdays and the quality of his work.

The workday system is a means of consolidating and expanding common property, and an incentive for collectivists to work more and better. There are, however, some collectives in which workdays are squandered, either through the assignment of extensive administrative work or through allocation of workdays to jobs which do not contribute to the increase of production. Socialist competition is one of the best means of good labor organization at collectives. Chairmen of collectives, brigade leaders, teams, and individual collectivists who engage in socialist competition contribute to larger harvests and to greater common earnings. The development and strengthening of the collective depends to a great extent upon the manner in which the collective is managed. Collectivists must be allowed to participate in the management of the collective and to develop their initiative. Regular meetings must be called and reports must be submitted to the general meeting. The principle of internal democracy at collectives must be extensively applied.

There are still cases where the principle of internal democracy is disregarded by state and party activists. The production plan, for example, is drawn up in the office of the raion party committee or the raion people's council without consulting the members of the collective. Such bureaucratic practices lead to disregard of real possibilities of collectives and of local resources, and consequently result in confusion rather than profitable activity.

The experience of Soviet kolkhozes and of Rumanian collectives proves that collective farming is the only way to a plentiful life for peasants. The rapid development of collectives can only be attained by the systematic accumulation of basic funds, according to the provisions of the model statute, through diligent work, and through the correct organization of collective labor. These concerted efforts will yield increasingly better harvests, they will increase animal productivity and consequently the income of collectives.

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State and collective ownership are the basis for socialism in Rumania. The protection of collective property is the duty of all those who work. The Model Statute for Collectives states that any alienation of collective, or state property, any sabotage against the property, animals of a collective, or MTS machines, is considered a betrayal of the common interest and an aid and comfort to the enemies of the people. The strict observance of people's justice as is written in the constitution of the Rumanian People's Republic, in the laws of the country, and in the Model Statute for Collectives must be introduced in every collective. Communists are required to protect common property against any hostile action by kulaks, or their stooges, and against any negligence in handling public property.

The consolidation of collectives calls for increased vigilance against kulaks and against all enemies who might try to hurt collectives from within. Kulaks try to infiltrate into collectives, to undermine and destroy them. For example, 16 kulaks infiltrated into the Berveni Collective, Carei Raion, Baia-Mare Regiune. Two of these kulaks were even elected members of the management council. For more than 18 months they conducted adverse activities which led the collective to the brink of destruction. The members did not work, the land was inadequately plowed and planted, and animals were neglected. Several wives of collectivists, spurred by kulaks, requested the raion party committee to disband the collective in 1951. The criminal activity of the kulaks was finally discovered and they were ousted from the collective. Since then the collective has improved and progressed. In 1953 the Berveni Collective was a flourishing collective and included all the peasants of the village, except the 40 kulaks.

More than 3,000 kulaks were ousted from many collectives throughout the country. This resulted in the consolidation of the collectives and better management. Every member of a collective must exercise vigilance against kulaks. The members of some collectives, however, are negligent with public property. For example, the Dudesti-Cioplea Collective, Bucharest Regiune, wasted considerable amounts of grain in the fields during the harvest because of negligence in gathering the harvest. Furthermore, a large portion of the vegetable production of the Platonesti Collective, Fetesti Raion, Constanta Regiune, was squandered because of haphazard distribution. Other collectives do not give enough attention to animals and agricultural implements and the harvests are not guarded in the fields. Such negligence is a crime against common property. It must be curbed and the guilty persons must be punished. Joint efforts against plunderers and thieves who steal public property, and against cheaters and negligent individuals will contribute to the protection and strengthening of this property. The control committees at collectives must detect and unmask any infringements against collectives and collectivists' interests. Collectivists and the public in general must be informed that control committees must safeguard the public interest, besides being entrusted with the closing of the yearly balance sheets. It is important that the prestige and the authority of control committees be increased and stressed. These committees are the watchdogs for the collectives against the mismanagement and squandering of public funds.

Party and state agencies must systematically guide and assist all collectives. The assistance received from these parties has largely contributed to the successes obtained by collectivists, to the raising of their standard of living and their educational level. The concern of the party for the welfare and prosperity of collectives was evidenced by the decision of March 1951 of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party and the Council of Ministers of the Rumanian People's Republic, and later by a second decision of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party of September 1951. Successes obtained thus far and shortcomings still prevailing at some collectives were analysed at the Congress of Collective Leaders, May 1953. The new Model Statute for Collectives was approved and adopted.

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The plenary session of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party of 19-20 August 1953 criticized the lack of support to collectives in the expansion of common property. State credits were not used effectively. Some central organizations and agencies underestimated the importance of collectives and did not supply them with the necessary materials, equipment, and installations for the exploitation of their investments. The Ministry of Agriculture did not follow up deliveries of material and equipment to collectives. For this reason, 34 percent of the credits granted for constructions and 32 percent granted by the state for the purchase of machines and equipment could not be utilized in the first quarter of 1953. This was a serious handicap in the effort to increase common property.

The decision adopted in the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party of 19-20 August 1953 provided for a series of improvements, aids, and credits for collectives in 1954 and 1955. Collectives will receive 300 million lei in various credits for construction, purchase of equipment, live stock, and for expansion. At the same time the government will see to it that the materials are made available to collectives.

The decision further provides for training and assignment of technicians and specialists in various agricultural fields, and for the creation of new MTS.

Collectives have been exempt from taxation on income derived from new stock farms for the next two years, regardless of the date when the original collective was created. Excess production per hectare has also been exempt from taxation. Taxes on pure breed sheep have been reduced and in some cases even canceled. Collectivists were encouraged to sell their surplus produce and animal products on free markets under exemption of income taxes.

The plenary session further cautioned party and state agents not to relax their aid to collectives. Such negligence can lead to the deterioration and dissolution of collectives. Regiune and raion people's councils must supervise the strict enforcement of contracts between collectives and MTS. The people's councils must educate and guide collectivists to understand the importance of common property and its growth. Engineers and technicians at MTS and at agricultural sections of people's councils must instruct collectivists in all branches of agriculture and animal husbandry. Collectives must be urged and encouraged to set up brigades and teams. Records must be kept correctly, so that the distribution of income can be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the statute.

Primary party organizations must establish close contact with collective managements and ask for periodic reports from the chairman, the brigade leaders, the bookkeeper, and the control committee. Party organizations must hold meetings, discuss collective problems, and suggest the best measures for their solution. The decisions taken by the primary party organization are accepted at general meetings of collective members. Regiune and raion committees, in turn, constantly work with primary party organizations. These committees help raise the educational and technical level of primary party members, so that they can better help collectives. There are, however, some regiune and raion committees which neglect their duty towards primary party organizations. Consequently, inefficient or inadequately trained organizers are sent to collectives. These men do not know how to organize labor at collectives and only cause harm. It is the duty of every party committee to assure that collectives be provided with good party organizers.

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